Creation of Buffer Stock of Sugar

246. SHRI R.P. GOENKA: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a proposal has been formulated to create a buffer stock of sugar;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is a fact that the proposal has been strongly opposed by the cane farming community contending *inter-alia* that it would run counter to the proposed decontrol of the sugar industry which is to be achieved by the end of the financial year 2002-03; and

(d) the details of the major points made by the farming community and views of the other concerned interests of sugar industry and the final decision taken on the proposal?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI V. SREENIVASA PRASAD): (a) and (b) Yes Sir, A proposal for creation of buffer stock is under consideration of the Government.

(c) No, sir.

(d) Does not arise.

Packing of Foodgrains in plastic bags

247. SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) what is the shelf life of wheat, rice and sugar if packed in plastic bags in bulk; and

(b) the countries which use plastic bags for the bulk packing of wheat, rice and sugar and for what period?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI U.V. KRISHNAM RAJU): (a) No such study to assess the shelf life of wheat, rice and sugar if packed in plastic bags has been conducted.

(b) Indonesia, Malaysia, Middle East, Brazil, Cuba, E.U. Countries etc. use plastic packing for sugar. However, at present Government agencies are not using plastic bags for packing of foodgrains meant for the Central Pool.